UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/33
12 June 2001

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on the Promotion
and Protection of Human Rights
Fifty-third session
Item 4 of the provisional agenda

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Note by the secretariat

1. At its fiftieth session, the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, in its resolution 1998/8, decided to establish, for a three-year period, a sessional working group, composed of five of its members, to examine the working methods and activities of transnational corporations.

2. At its second session, held during the fifty-second session of the Sub-Commission, the working group had before it for discussion three working papers submitted by Mr. David Weissbrodt: "Principles relating to human rights conduct of companies" (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/WG.2/WP.1) and its two addenda containing background information and a list of existing sources of international standards drawn on in the preparation of the draft principles (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/WG.2/WP.1/Add.1 and Add.2). In its recommendations for future work, the working group, inter alia, invited Mr. Weissbrodt to revise and update his draft standards on the human rights conduct of companies, in the light of the need for more detail on ways to implement them, and to submit his revised working paper to the sessional working group and the Sub-Commission at their next sessions (see the report of the sessional working group on the working methods and activities of transnational corporations on its second session (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/12), paras. 10 and 61).

GE.01-14188 (E) 140601

3. In this regard, the secretariat received the following four working papers prepared by Mr. Weissbrodt which will be issued as documents of the working group at its third session, to be held during the fifty-third session of the Sub-Commission:

(a) Introduction to the draft universal human rights guidelines for companies (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/WG.2/WP.1);

(b) Draft universal human rights guidelines for companies (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/WG.2/WP.1/Add.1);

(c) Background paper on source materials for the draft universal human rights guidelines for companies (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/WG.2/WP.1/Add.2); and

(d) Report of the seminar to discuss the draft United Nations human rights guidelines for companies (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/WG.2/WP.1/Add.3).

4. Pursuant to the recommendation of the working group, the above four working papers will also be made available to the Sub-Commission as background documents under item 4 of its provisional agenda.